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INFO RUEHDX/MOSCOW POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHKV/AMEMBASSY KYIV IMMEDIATE 0146
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE 6075
RUEHSI/AMEMBASSY TBILISI IMMEDIATE 5661
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C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 000307

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/27/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [NATO](#) [MOPS](#) [PREF](#) [GG](#) [RU](#)
SUBJECT: UKRAINE TO NATO - RUSSIA THREATENS THE REGION

REF: A. USNATO 304 (NOTAL)
[1](#)B. USNATO 290

Classified By: Ambassador Kurt Volker
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: At Kyiv's request the NATO-Ukraine Commission met August 27 to discuss Russia's intervention in Georgia and its implications for regional security. Deputy FM Konstantyn Yeliseyev delivered a stark analysis of Ukraine's own relationship with Russia, and related Moscow's threats to Kyiv delivered during the conflict. Yeliseyev highlighted the level of Ukraine's support for Georgia, and expressed hope that NATO and Ukraine could work closely together. Allies expressed strong support for Ukraine, although traditional Ukraine MAP skeptics tended to focus on praising Ukraine's commitment to peacefully resolving disputes, rather than discussing ways to deter the Russian conduct. The NUC released a strong Chairman's statement, largely in line with previously-issued NAC statements.

[1](#)2. (C) DSYG Claudio Bisogniero welcomed Ukrainian Deputy Foreign Minister and Special Envoy for Georgia Konstantyn Yeliseyev for a special August 27 meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission. Kyiv had requested the session to address Ukraine's perspectives on Russia's conduct in Georgia and its implications for stability in the region. End summary.

UKRAINE ON RUSSIA'S AIMS IN GEORGIA

[1](#)3. (C) Yeliseyev opened by observing that it is impossible to establish who was responsible for unleashing the fighting in South Ossetia, but he shared that seven Russian ships had moved from Ukraine to Novorossiysk in early July (allegedly for exercises) and nine more had sailed to the conflict zone on August 9.

[1](#)4. (C) The Deputy FM asserted that the subsequent Russian conduct had six goals:

- To overthrow President Saakashvili;
- To rescind the results of the Rose Revolution in 2004;
- To establish control over energy transit lines that run through Georgia;

-- To return Georgia to Russia's sphere of influence;
-- To accelerate the disintegration of Georgia; and
-- To weaken the political situation in neighboring states in the post-Soviet space.

¶15. (C) Yeliseyev condemned Russia's "extreme disproportionate use of force," used in a "well prepared invasion deep into Georgian territory." He said the conflict had featured flagrant Russian violation of basic international norms and a high proportion of civilian casualties as a result of widespread disregard for the laws of war.

¶16. (C) The Deputy FM also decried the spill-over of the conflict into the wider region. Ukraine was immediately enmeshed in the conflict due to Russia's deployment of ships from the Black Sea Fleet based on Ukrainian territory. Yeliseyev said Ukraine had on August 9 called on the Russian authorities to coordinate the movements of Russian naval vessels and to conclude a bilateral agreement on the movement of the Black Sea fleet in crisis situations. The Deputy FM said President Yushchenko had issued an August 13 decree stipulating that the Russian fleet must seek clearance from Ukrainian authorities before it can enter or leave Ukrainian territory. He reminded PermReps that a clearance regime of this kind established in 1999 is still in force, but had been simplified after a request from the Russian side.

RUSSIA EYES UKRAINE

¶17. (C) Yeliseyev believed that Russia is also pursuing goals relating to Ukraine, which he listed as:

-- To weaken and misbalance relations between the branches of power in Ukraine;
-- To provoke protests, especially in Crimea;
-- To conduct an anti-Ukraine information campaign;
-- To attempt to discredit the Ukrainian leadership;
-- To take a "strong" position on sensitive issues for Ukraine, including demarcation of the border and implementation of the basic agreements concerning the Black Sea fleet; and
-- To pressure Ukraine by threatening withdrawal from the 1997 Agreement on Friendship, Cooperation, and Partnership (he said September 30 is the deadline for notification for withdrawal). He explained this treaty stipulates Russian respect for Ukraine's territorial integrity, which otherwise would not be prominently reaffirmed in the Ukrainian-Russian Federation international framework.

¶18. (C) Yeliseyev decried accusatory statements by the Russian Foreign Ministry and military about alleged Ukrainian assistance to rearm the Georgians. He insisted that Ukraine has valid bilateral treaties with Georgia on military and technical cooperation, instruments which break no international law. President Yushchenko had recently received a letter from President Medvedev accusing Ukraine of arming Georgia and warning Ukraine to refrain from any "unreasoned" actions concerning the Russian Black Sea fleet in Ukraine. Medvedev had also threatened that "any interference of Ukraine into Black Sea fleet affairs will negatively influence the state of bilateral relations with Russia (Note: larger extracts follow at the end of this cable. End note).

¶19. (C) The Deputy FM dismissed fears that Ukraine could become the next target of a resurgent Russia. He said Ukraine would never yield to provocations, would strengthen its sovereignty and independence, would cooperate with NATO, and would retain its capacity to resolve difficulties peacefully.

LET'S JOIN TOGETHER

¶10. (C) Yeliseyev called for a unified Euro-Atlantic coalition to restore peace and security in the region. He implied this would encourage a strong, successful and confident Ukraine, which would be the best guarantee for the future of regional stability. The Deputy FM also said he

would welcome a strengthening of NATO's political and practical support to Ukraine.

¶11. (C) Yeliseyev concluded that the time has come for the international community to establish new peacekeeping and conflict management structures for South Ossetia, Abkhazia, Transnistria and Nagorno Karabakh, with genuine international supervision and control. He warned of the dangers of a growing sense of impunity for those who violate the principles of territorial integrity and sovereignty, observing that the international community has no effective response. Yeliseyev listed the UN, OSCE and CIS as examples of international organizations which had failed to find and enforce a quick and effective resolution of the conflict. He praised the French initiative to bring peace but concluded that it was unlikely under the current circumstances to bring a resolution to the crisis.

¶12. (C) From all of this Yeliseyev drew the conclusion that the security guarantees that NATO offers its members are the best available security guarantee. He argued that if NATO chooses not to meet Georgia and Ukraine's desire to join, the long term security of NATO countries themselves would be impacted. NATO would have demonstrated that it is unwilling to assume responsibility for security in the wider European region. Yeliseyev argued that even if enlargement is not on the agenda for the time being, NATO must still display internal unity and take proportionate measures that could

deter an aggressor. Yeliseyev also warned that if NATO were to fail this test, its credibility would be placed in doubt and the other countries of the region would have to satisfy their demand for security elsewhere.

¶13. (C) Yeliseyev closed his statement by saying that an eventual invitation for Ukraine to join MAP would be a strong signal to Russia that its use of military force is a tactic that cannot stop NATO enlargement. He said that the unconcluded MAP issue remains the primary temptation for Russia to repeat Georgia's experience on Ukrainian soil.

¶14. (C) Yeliseyev thanked the governments of the United States, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Greece and Poland for the assistance they provided in response to the recent flooding in Ukraine.

ALLIES FIRING UP, BUT A LONG WAY TO GO

¶15. (C) All PermReps welcomed the opportunity to have a discussion with Ukraine on Georgia and its regional implications.

¶16. (C) German PermRep Brandenburg thought it unusual to be having a meeting with one Partner to discuss another, but said he understood the exceptional circumstances. He said Germany shares Ukraine's concerns about the conflict in Georgia, describing Russian actions as totally unacceptable. However, he warned that no solution would be possible without Russia, adding he felt strongly that channels with Russia must be kept open. Brandenburg said he shared Ukraine's concern at the tone of President Medvedev's letter. At the same time, he indicated that it was neither the place nor the time to discuss MAP for Ukraine.

¶17. (C) Spain echoed the German intervention by focusing on the importance of a constructive NATO-Russia relationship. Even though NATO could not have "business as usual" with Moscow, he stressed that Russia continues to be important to the Alliance.

¶18. (C) Ambassador Volker said he was struck by the hostile tone of the Medvedev letter and reaffirmed U.S. support for Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty. He noted that events in Georgia must be understood in their wider context. The Ambassador argued that while it is important to avoid inflammatory rhetoric, we cannot allow ourselves

through hesitancy to negatively influence the facts on the ground. He expressed thanks for Ukraine's efforts to play a helpful role in Georgia and hoped that discussions in this format at NATO would continue.

¶19. (C) Lithuania said Ukraine should play a wider role in regional security. Latvia said Russian justifications sound especially hollow on Russia's borders.

¶20. (C) In an interesting role reversal, the countries most skeptical of Ukraine and Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations were the most vocal supporters of the decisions taken in Bucharest. Germany, France, Spain, Slovakia and Norway, fearing an immediate conversation about providing MAP to Ukraine, all underlined that the Bucharest Declaration said Allies would consider MAP in December. Estonia, the Czech Republic, and the U.S. looked forward to that consideration of MAP, while Canada called for it to happen sooner. The skeptics also avoided Ukraine's warning of tough times ahead by praising Kyiv's commitment to the peaceful resolution of disputes. Belgium commented on the need to ensure that Russia paid a price for its negative behavior, while at the same time avoiding the deepening of divisions.

¶21. (C) Canada, the Netherlands and Croatia all asked about the impact of the crisis on Ukrainian public opinion. Yeliseyev sidestepped the question by arguing that implementation of MAP would positively impact public support for the Alliance.

NATO-Ukraine Commission Statement

¶22. (U) Begin text:

The NATO-Ukraine Commission met on 27 August in Ambassadorial session with the participation of Ukrainian Deputy Foreign Minister Konstantyn Yeliseyev, Presidential Special Envoy to Georgia, to exchange views on Security in the Euro-Atlantic area in the context of the current situation in Georgia.

Special Envoy Yeliseyev provided Allies with information about Ukraine's perception of the situation in Georgia, based on his recent visits to Georgia, and presented Ukraine's position regarding recent developments in that country. He expressed Ukraine's deep concern over the situation in Georgia and its readiness to contribute to the settlement of the conflict, which was appreciated by Allies.

Ukraine welcomed and fully shared the Allied position on the situation in Georgia, reflected in the 19 August Statement of NATO Foreign Ministers. The NATO-Ukraine Commission expressed its deep concern over the current situation in Georgia, and its implications on security in the Caucasus and the Euro-Atlantic area. The NATO-Ukraine Commission stressed the urgency of swift, complete and good faith implementation of the 6-point agreement signed by Russia and Georgia, including a new international mechanism to monitor respect for these engagements. Our nations support the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of Partner nations.

The NATO-Ukraine Commission condemned the decision by the Russian Federation to extend recognition to the South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions of Georgia. Russia's decision violates the many UN Security Council resolutions it has endorsed regarding Georgia's territorial integrity, and is inconsistent with the fundamental OSCE principles.

Allied Ambassadors reiterated the decision taken by NATO Heads of State and Government at the Bucharest Summit regarding Georgia's and Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic aspirations.

End text.

Extracts from Medvedev letters provided to USNATO:

¶23. (C) Excerpts from the Letter of the President of the Russian Federation D. Medvedev to the President of Ukraine V.

Yushchenko, 23 August 2008

"I have to say it straightforwardly that the position of the Ukrainian authorities with regard to the Georgian aggression aroused deep rejection in Russia. The official Kyiv in effect sided with the criminal Saakashvili regime which it had actively armed all those years, including the supplies of heavy offensive weapons. One should yet need to look into the role of the Ukrainian military experts in the training of the Georgian army, as well as their actions during the military actions against South Ossetia. You will not be able to keep silent about it."

...

"I would like to also warn you against new, ill-considered actions with regard to the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation which is in the area of our special attention. It (the fleet) operates in strict correspondence with international agreements and my directives as the Commander-in-Chief. A non-qualified interference in these matters may negatively affect the entire complex of Ukrainian-Russian relations."

VOLKER